



**American Hospital  
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January 31, 2017

The Honorable Heidi Heitkamp  
United States Senate  
110 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C., 20510

Dear Senator Heitkamp:

On behalf of the American Hospital Association's (AHA) nearly 2,000 small and rural hospital members, I am writing to express our strong support for Rural Hospital Regulatory Relief Act of 2017 (S. 243), which would permanently extend the enforcement moratorium on direct supervision requirements for outpatient therapeutic services provided in critical access hospitals and small, rural hospitals.

Your legislation would provide immediate and permanent regulatory relief to small, rural hospitals and ensure these communities will continue to have access to outpatient therapeutic services. As you know, these services have always been provided by licensed, skilled professionals under the overall supervision of a physician and with the assurance of rapid assistance from a team of caregivers, including a physician. While hospitals recognize the need for direct supervision for certain outpatient services that pose a high risk or are very complex, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services policy generally applies to even the lowest risk services.

The AHA applauds your continued leadership on behalf of rural hospitals and the patients and communities they serve. Again, we are pleased to support S. 243 and look forward to working with you and your colleagues to achieve its passage.

Sincerely,

Thomas P. Nickels  
Executive Vice President

